Pradesh during 1998-99 to 2000-01 is given in Annex I. (*See* Appendix 193, Annexure No. 10).

There is no approved panel of consultants in National Highways Authority of India. The agencies are selected, as and when required through open competitive bidding for preparation of estimates for different works of the Authority.

Four Lanning National Highway-5

610. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to remove traffic congestion in all the National Highways;

(b) whether four lanning work has been initiated for the purpose;

(c) if so, whether such four lanning has started on NH-5;

(d if so, the specific four lanning work started on Khargpur and Chhatrapur portion on NH-5; and

(e) the progress thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRASNPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government has undertaken improvement works such as widening single lane sections to 2 lanes, four lanning existing 2 lane sections, construction of road over bridges, by-passes etc., depending upon traffic needs and availability of funds on various National Highways.

(c) to (e) Contracts for four-lanning of NH-5 from Chennai to Balasore including Chhatrapur and NH-60 between Balasore and Khargpur have been recently awarded and work has commenced under most of the contracts.

Cutting of old trees in West Bengal

611. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of 200 year old trees on Jessore Road linking Kolkata and Dhaka are being cut down in road widening operations;

(b) whether Government thought of any tree-saving devices in this age of high technology in the process; and

(c) if so, why the precious trees are being felled against environmental norms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) Thirty three number of trees have been cut in order to construct the approaches to Naubhasan and Hakakor bridge between km. 55.6 to km. 58.3 which were absolutely necessary.

(b) Due care is taken in the project preparation to avoid tree cutting.

(c) The environmental norms and local regulations have been followed and twice the number of trees cut will be planted along the road.

Study Group on Development of Small Scale Enterprises

612. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that dismantling of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) has adversely affected the Small Scale Industries;

(b) whether a study group on development of small scale enterprises headed by the Planning Commission member S.P. Gupta has submitted its report; and

(c) if so, the findings and recommendations made in the report and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Government is constantly monitoring the impact of the removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) and WTO Agreements on the economy including the small scale industries (SSIs) in the country. While the removal of QRs have exposed the SSIs to greater competition, there has not